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LETTER

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR DAVID DUNDAS, K. B.

Commander in Chief of all His Majesty's Forces.

BY ROBERT JACKSON, M.D.

LATE PHYSICIAN TO THE FORCES AND HEAD OF THE HOSPITAL AT THE ARMY DEPÔT.

LONDON:

1809.

C. Roworth, Printer, Bell-yard, Temple-bar.

A

LETTER,

&c. &c. &c.

SIR,

I ENCROACH upon your time with unwillingness, but as the discipline of the medical department of the army is a concern of importance to His Majesty's service, I believe it to be my duty to submit to your consideration, as Commander in Chief of the Forces, such information as I may possess on that subject. On the presumption that I am only doing my duty, I take the liberty of presenting you with the following statement. If it do not enable you fully to judge of the principle according to which the business of that department is conducted, it will at least enable you to form an estimate of the character of some of the members of the Board, to whose management the superintendance of the army's health is committed.—The history is irksome as it materially concerns myself; but I shall endeavour to be brief in the detail.

In November 1800, I was appointed Physician to the Forces and Head of the Hospital at the Army Depôt, which was then considered as the most important medical station in the kingdom. The recommendation proceeded from His Royal Highness, the Commander in Chief, without application or knowledge on my part. I was not in my own mind desirous of the office; but as I was named to it I was solicitous to execute my duty to the best of my ability, both as acquitting myself of an important trust, and as testifying the sense which I entertained of the high mark of confidence which His Royal Highness had been pleased to place in me. As the title of the appointment (viz. Head of the Hospital) rendered me according to the common interpretation of the word responsible for the conduct of the business in all its details, I considered myself at liberty, or more properly speaking bound by the tenor of my duty, to rectify such parts of the existing management, as appeared, on good evidence to be erroneous, or to supply such parts as appeared to be defective. As I had conducted those hospitals with the management of which I had been previously intrusted upon a simple plan and with a striking comparative economy of means, I proceeded on the present occasion with the approbation of Major General Hewett, Commandant of the Depôt and my immediate commanding officer, to adopt measures similar to those on which I had formerly acted; for I was not aware at the time that there

there was any other object in the view of the Army Medical Board, except that an hospital should be conducted in the best manner and at the smallest expense. It here became my duty to take away, not to add.—The alterations which I introduced were known to Major General Hewett, and they were approved by him, as he has testified publicly.* It was indeed impossible, had I been so disposed, to have acted in secret. The transactions of a public hospital are necessarily open; and returns, or details of proceeding are moreover sent officially to the Medical Board at stated times: Hence the alterations, or new arrangements were known to the Board itself soon after they were formed; they were even approved by Mr. Keate, one of the members of the Board, when he made a visit at Chatham in the month of June; an approbation which was expressed in the presence of Major General Hewett and of Mr. Warren, then Garrison Surgeon, now Deputy Inspector of Hospitals.

That you may be enabled to form some idea of the nature and extent of the retrenchments which I effected on this occasion, I simply observe that the Purveyor's quarterly account of hospital deburse-ments at Chatham, from September 1800 to December following, at which time I had introduced

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* See General Hewett's Letter to Sir John M. Hayes, Bart. President of the Special Board—in the proceedings of that Board, printed 1808.

no alterations into the system of economy, amounted to £2000 nearly; in the quarter from December to March, 1801, when I had introduced alterations, but not finished what I intended, it sunk to about £1400; and in the next quarter, when the arrangements were farther advanced, it was only about £1100. At the hospital in the Isle of Wight, when what I had intended was completed, the daily expence of the sick soldiers subsistence was defrayed for the sum of ten pence per man, as it now is throughout the army in Great Britain. It then amounted, in the general hospitals within the kingdom, to two shillings and four pence, as may be proved by reference to the hospital accounts of that date, particularly York Hospital supposed to be under the immediate superintendance of the Surgeon General himself.

The economical system formed by me, and acted on at the depôt hospital in the Isle of Wight, having been formally submitted by Major General Hewett to the Secretary at War; the Army Medical Board was called upon to give opinion, whether it should be adopted at other hospitals in the kingdom, or whether it should be discontinued at the army depôt. The system had been in operation for several months, and nothing, so far as I know, had been objected to it by any of the members of the Board. It however now happened that an epidemic sickness, added to the usual diseases of a crowded depôt of recruits, prevailed in Parkhurst barracks

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in the latter end of the year 1801; and as there was great sickness, there was, as might reasonably be expected from the character of the sickness, considerable mortality. The Physician General and Surgeon General, the two acting members of the Board at the time, waving the direct question which had been put to them respecting economical arrangement, and taking advantage of the accidental occurrence of sickness which was accompanied by some mortality, made representations, or rather preferred charges against my management, or, as they explained themselves, against the effects of it; in the hopes of thereby accomplishing a purpose which they had long cherished, viz. my removal from the service, as a person disposed to innovate, that is, to husband the expenditure of public money in the department which was placed under my direction.

His Royal Highness, the Commander in Chief, considering the representations or charges alluded to (viz. unprecedented mortality, frequent relapse, tedious recovery, and debilitated patients), as important to the interests of the army, thought proper to appoint a Board of Medical Officers, specially to investigate the subject, and to report opinion. The Board, thus appointed, inspected the hospital, enquired into the circumstances of management, and reported thereon for the information of the Commander in Chief. In consequence of the report of the special Board, His Royal Highness thought himself warranted to express the opinion

according to my apprehension of things, to hold intercourse of any kind with a person who had acted so insidiously as he had done, I required to be exempted, by authority, from such communication. The exemption could not be conceded, and I desired leave to resign. The resignation was accepted; but the letter in the margin shews that I retired with the regrets—not with the censure of the Commander in Chief.*

I retired from service, because I could not, according to my own opinion, serve usefully; but I retired voluntarily. The letter now referred to proves this indisputably: a report, notwithstanding, soon found its way to the ear of the public that I was removed compulsively, as unfit to perform the duty of physician. The representation, or charge made

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* *Horse Guards, 3d March*, 1802.

Sir,

I have not failed to lay before the Commander in Chief your letter of the 18th ultimo, with its enclosures. Entertaining, as His Royal Highness does, the most favourable opinion of your zealous exertion in the execution of your duty, and setting a just estimation on the merits of your former services, he cannot but regret your having expressed a desire to retire to half-pay; at the same time, as you represent your present situation as so little to be reconciled to your feelings, and contributing so little to your comfort, His Royal Highness cannot desire you to continue in it, and will therefore submit your resignation to His Majesty.

I have, &c. &c.

(Signed) ROBERT BROWNRIGG.

To Dr. Jackson.

by

by the Physician General and Surgeon General in 1801, relative to the depôt hospital in the Isle of Wight, inferred unfitness on my part; and on that ground, I considered the report as proceeding from them, and as propagated by their emissaries. To the effect of the report I was perfectly indifferent as an individual, for it was made in ignorance, the Physician General, as he acknowledges himself in a letter dated the 28th of December, 1801, having had no opportunity of judging the case by fair evidence.* But as a report of this nature, however er-

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* *Copy of a Letter from the Physician and Surgeon General to the Deputy Secretary at War.*

Upper Brook-street, 28th Dec. 1801.

Sir,

We have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th instant, and we beg humbly to represent, for the consideration of the Commander in Chief, and of the Secretary at War, that it does not occur to us, that in our letter of the 10th instant, we animadverted on the practice of Dr. Jackson at the Isle of Wight; but we thought it our duty to represent the great mortality there, and consequently animadverted on the success of the practice; or otherwise we must appear to His Royal Highness to prejudge Dr. Jackson, and to pass a censure, where, from our not having witnessed and investigated Dr. Jackson's practice, we might do an act of injustice; we hope you will pardon the liberty we have taken in referring to the above expression in your letter, and we humbly conceive that the Secretary at War will not disapprove of this explanation.

We have the honour, &c. &c.

(Signed) L. PEPYS,
T. KEATE.

To M. Lewis, Esq. &c. &c. &c.

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roneous, could not fail to make an impression in the army, and perhaps such a one as might be injurious to the service, I was urged strongly by some friends, who heard more of it than they chose to speak, to contradict it publicly. I did so in 1803; and, in the statements which I then gave, I believe it is proved demonstratively by authentic evidence that the charges made against my professional management, or against the results from that management in the hospitals at the army depôt, are not only unfounded, but, in a most striking manner, the reverse of the truth.*

When the Army of Reserve was formed at the commencement of the present war, I was appointed Inspector General of its Hospitals. The Physician General and Surgeon General had not been consulted on the occasion, and they probably considered that my appointment to an office of much apparent importance would be regarded as a marked censure of their past conduct; for their proceedings, relative to the depôt hospitals, were now fully exposed in the statements given in my publication of 1803. That work had been two months from the press, and I have cause to believe two months in the possession of Sir Lucas Pepys and Mr. Keate, without any notice being taken of it. When my appointment appeared in the Gazette, the Physician-General and Surgeon General approached the Commander in Chief

* See Remarks on the Constitution of the Medical Department, 1803.

with

with humble representations praying His Royal Highness's protection, in as much as they were insulted by me in the execution of their official duties. I had only vindicated my character from unjust aspersions, which I believed I had a right to do; their representations hinted at insubordination; and His Royal Highness thought proper to suspend my appointment, "until I should substantiate (as expressed in Colonel Clinton's letter) the charges published against my superior officers, or explain to their satisfaction the parts of the late publication alluded to in their letter." I professed myself ready, as appears by my letter to Colonel Clinton*, dated July 23d, 1803, to support the truth of whatever I had stated in the book alluded to in any court the Commander in Chief should think fit to appoint; and I am ready to do it still, at any responsibility that can attach to a man or officer.—The case was not tried, and the suspension still remains, that is, the appointment did not take place.

My system of hospital economy had been impugned, the effects of it strongly deprecated by the Physician General and Surgeon General, in 1801. It must thus be supposed to have been proscribed from the army; yet in 1803, the new code of regulation, which was framed for the management of regimental hospitals, rests on a similar basis, as far as re-

* Printed in my letter to Mr. Keate, 1808.

spects

spects economy, with that on which I acted when I was intrusted with the direction of hospitals in different services. The hospital expense is calculated, according to the new regulation, not to exceed ten pence per man; and it was defrayed only by a fraction less than that sum at the depôt hospital in the Isle of Wight. The new regulation was, I believe, projected by Mr. Knight, the present Inspector General; but it was sanctioned officially by Sir Lucas Pepys, Physician General, and by Mr. Keate, Surgeon General to the Forces. By the sanction which these officers gave to the hospital regulation of 1803, (the economical part of which is not more liberal than that which they condemned in 1801,) they must be supposed to have obtained a new light on the subject of hospital economy; or they must be supposed to have acted contrary to the conviction of their own minds in compliance with the wishes of the Inspector General. I do not know which is the case; but there is here an undeniable alternative, either that I am acquitted, by the economical regulation of 1803, of injuriously diminishing the comforts of the sick soldier; or, that the Physician General and Surgeon General are guilty of a breach of the most sacred of duties, in curtailing the means, which they believe in conscience to be necessary for the recovery of the soldiers' health, that they may not oppose the opinion of their colleague.

The Commissioners who were appointed, under the authority of Parliament, to enquire into the conduct

conduct and management of the different military departments of the state, directed their attention to the medical among others, and in the fifth report, which came out in 1808, suggested alterations in that branch of the service, which produced a strong sensation in the minds of Sir Lucas Pepys and Mr. Keate. I had written on different occasions upon the subject of medical arrangement for armies, and the Commissioners, as it appears, had looked into my books: but, as I was not examined by them, nor consulted by them directly or indirectly, I cannot with any justice be held responsible for their opinions. The Physician General and Surgeon General were apprehensive they might be ejected from their offices in consequence of the informations of the report. Their indignation, as may naturally be supposed, was kindled against the Commissioners; but, as the torrents of abuse and foul language, which flow so readily from the pen of the persons who have lent themselves to advocate the cause of Sir Lucas Pepys and Mr. Keate, could not perhaps have been applied to the Commissioners without a dread of pains and penalties as these gentlemen are clothed with official authority, a great share of it was directed against me, under the supposition that I was the source from which their information had been derived. It is probable that the Commissioners were sometimes directed by what they found in my writings, concerning the mode of enquiry to be pursued in the task which was assigned them; but

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as it was their express duty to substantiate truth by evidence upon oath before they reported to the public, it belongs to others to judge whether or not they have failed in that duty :—I cannot admit that I have led them into error.

Dr. Bancroft addressed a letter to the Commissioners in his own name, and he very probably composed the observations which appeared under the name of Mr. Keate,* (on the fifth report), and which were presented to the public in the course of last summer. In these publications great pains and labour were employed in endeavouring to invalidate the accuracy of my opinions on the subject of medical arrangement; and, as the Commissioners were supposed by these writers to have been misled by me, I considered it to be my duty to reply to such points as seemed to deserve notice, furnishing at the same time additional evidence and proof of the truth and utility of what I had recommended. In this I cannot be supposed to be advocate for the Commissioners. I

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* Dr. Bancroft is one of the Censors of the College of Physicians of London. The Surgeon General, supposing that he would also be a good censor of surgeons, and useful for other purposes, applied, it must be presumed with the official concurrence of the Physician-General, that the Doctor might be brought upon the lists of full pay, in order to be placed in the Surgeon-General's office as assistant. This indecorous proposition, which tended to degrade a Fellow of the College to a surgeon's assistant, was rejected by the Commander in Chief, who signified at the same time, that if the Doctor was capable of duty in his own line, foreign service was open to him; but this he appears to have declined.

have not the slightest acquaintance with any of them; and I am ready to allow that they have not gone to the bottom of their business in all cases. I can however discover no error or misrepresentation in those parts where I am competent to judge; and I hold myself responsible, under the severest penalty, for the truth of whatever can be said to be drawn from my sources.

Besides the observations made by Mr. Keate expressly on the fifth report, (and which is a subject on which he had a right to observe,) there is an appendix added to his work, in which he pretends to give some account of me. This he does purposely for offence as it is unconnected with his subject, which was his own justification in the view of the Commissioners; and he does it, at the same time, so directly in defiance of the customary discipline of the army, which forbids criminatory reference to matters that have been already judged, that I moved for an investigation before a military court. Mr. Keate refused to accede; and, as I was on half pay, I was precluded from demanding. In consequence of this refusal I addressed a letter to him which was laid before the public; and, I believe, I there proved so clearly the falsity of the assertions which he had made, or of the facts which he had alleged, that it may be matter of surprise to many that a man so arraigned should be permitted to hold the office of Surgeon General, till acquitted by public trial.

In the course of last autumn, when the military

energies of the nation seemed to receive a new impulse by the events which took place in Spain; and when almost every one was desirous to give aid in a cause which so nearly interested the independence of mankind, I stated to Colonel Gordon, Military Secretary to the Commander in Chief, that, if any circumstances should arise, in which my services could be useful, they were entirely at His Royal Highness's disposal, adding that it was a matter of indifference to me in what rank I served. The offer, thus made, was referred, through the Secretary at War, to the Army Medical Board. Two members of that Board, viz. the Physician General and Surgeon General, replied that there were various, and in their opinions, unsurmountable objections to my being employed in the medical department of the army. They were desired to state what these objections were, and accordingly, they gave in the paper subjoined, which appears to me to be of such a nature that, though I am officially informed no military proceeding can be instituted upon it, I am notwithstanding of opinion that, for the good of the army and the preservation of moral character among that class of His Majesty's subjects, it cannot be permitted to stand on record in a public office without notice on my part.

(Copy.)

Army Medical Board, Jan. 27th, 1809.

Sir,

Conformably to the directions conveyed in your letter of the 10th instant, we have the honour to

to state for the information of His Royal Highness the Commander in Chief, and of the Secretary at War, the facts and objections which appear to us as insurmountable objections to the employment of Dr. Jackson in the medical department of the army: they may be placed under five heads.

1st. Various acts of insubordination and disobedience in Dr. Jackson when formerly employed, of which instances and proofs will be found in the accompanying work, (about to be published by the Surgeon General) at pages 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 23, 24, 44, 60, 61, 62, 63, 88, 89, 133, 134, *and* 135. *These acts of disobedience appear to have occasioned considerable detriment to the service, and probably a loss of many lives, and they would, as we think, render it impossible to depend upon Dr. Jackson's conforming to the regulations of the service or to the directions which might be given to him, if he were again to be employed.*

(Signed) L. PEPYS,
T. KEATE.

Observation. The objection here made, on the score of insubordination and disobedience, recoils upon the Physician General and Surgeon General themselves, who neglected to prefer the formal charge at the time the offence was supposed to be committed; or, if the charge was made, the censure is transferred to the Commander in Chief, who, disregarding the discipline and good order of the army, failed to direct punishment on the spot for an offence of so

heinous a nature. Had I acted insubordinately, or had I even been supposed to have done so against properly authenticated authority, I may venture to say I would not have been permitted to retire without censure, for the late Commander in Chief was not indifferent to charges of insubordination; yet the letters in the margin at pages 8, 9, and 10, express His Royal Highness's approbation of my conduct while I did serve, and his regrets that I had desired to withdraw from service in 1802. What I have now said is perhaps sufficient on this point; but I may further add that I was head of the hospital at the army depôt, and that I acted under the immediate orders of Major General Hewett. Every communication in the shape of an order, connected with the Army Medical Board, must necessarily be communicated to me through General Hewett, otherwise the General did not command the garrison. When so communicated, it was authentic and as such was rigidly obeyed. General Hewett is now absent from England; but I may be allowed to say, without fear of contradiction, that no man in the British army possesses a more correct sense of propriety than the General and that no one executes his duties more impartially. That I never incurred his censure while I remained under his command is a constant source of satisfaction to myself, and a knowledge of the fact will, I believe, outweigh, in the estimate of the unprejudiced, the loose assertions of Sir Lucas Pepys and Mr. Keate on this head.

2dly.

2dly. The gross falsehoods and misrepresentations advanced by Dr. Jackson, especially in regard to occurrences at the Army Depôt Hospital while under his direction, as stated and proved in the accompanying work at pages 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 17, 18, 22, 24, 34, 50, 64, 78, 109, 110, 111, 112, *and* 138. *After such offences against truth and justice, no reliance could, as we conceive, be placed on any official communication from Dr. Jackson, nor could we feel ourselves safe in maintaining an intercourse with him.*

(Signed) L. PEPYS,
T. KEATE.

Observation. This head of objection is sufficient of itself, not only to prevent me from being employed in the army, but from being admitted into the society of gentlemen. The atrocity of the language exceeds all measure; but I abstain from animadversion on that head and only notice what concerns my own official character. The Commander in Chief, in the letter referred to in the margin at pages 8 and 9, expressed himself distinctly that the Physician General and Surgeon General were not grounded in their representations respecting the hospital in the Isle of Wight; consequently they were censured, as misrepresenting a fact; and, as the case was important, the offence was gross and heinous. I am here furnished with the opportunity of retorting the charge, and with the sanction of the highest authority; but retort is no vindica-

tion; and, as it is no proof of my own veracity that Sir Lucas Pepys and Mr. Keate have been deemed guilty of falsehood and reproved for an attempt to impose, I again repeat that I professed myself ready in the year 1803 to prove the truth of whatever I had stated in my publication; and I now add that I am ready still to go to trial on that or any other head which respects the Physician-General and Surgeon-General, before a competent court, at every risk of responsibility. If I am guilty of falsehood or wilful misrepresentation, my name ought not to stand even in the half-pay list of the army; and, if the Physician-General and Surgeon-General accuse me without grounds, they do not deserve, and they can scarcely be supposed to retain the confidence of His Majesty's government. A trial of some form or other, where the parties are confronted, will determine to whom the infamy of falsehood attaches. The interests of the service now imperiously demand it; for the character of the medical department of the army is sunk, in the eye of the public, to the lowest point of degradation from which it can only be retrieved by examples of rigour.

3dly. *Libellous and scandalous publications respecting the Physician General and Surgeon General, and principally that which Dr. Jackson has entitled "A Letter to Mr. Keate, Surgeon-General, at pages* 21, 33, 34, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 60, 61, 63, 65, 66, *and* 67." *It will be recollected that in consideration of Dr. Jackson's libellous publication of* 1803, *and*

of

of our humble representations concerning it to the Commander in Chief, of the 11*th of July,* 1803, *His Royal Highness was graciously pleased to consider him as unfit to be employed, and therefore thought it expedient to deprive him of an important office to which he had been recently appointed; and as the libellous passages to which we have just referred (in the Letter to Mr. Keate) seem to us, and have been deemed by counsel learned in the law, to be even more malicious and flagrant than those in his publication of* 1803, *(for which no atonement has yet been made) and as they were published after the Commander in Chief had so decidedly manifested his disapprobation of that species of misdemeanour, Dr. Jackson appears by his later publications to have rendered himself guilty of wilful contumacy towards His Royal Highness, and to have greatly aggravated his former offence by insulting and calumniating us most grievously in the exercise of our official duties. After these recent additional misdemeanours we humbly conceive that Dr. Jackson can have no claim to ask that the Commander in Chief should act in a manner inconsistent with his former determination, and with those laudable sentiments and principles which had induced His Royal Highness to revoke Dr. Jackson's appointment in* 1803, *in order to prevent that injury to the service, and to the discipline of the army, which might otherwise naturally have been expected to ensue.*

(Signed) L. PEPYS,
T. KEATE.

 Obser-

Observation.—My professional character was traduced in the year 1801: formal charges of a most aggravating nature were even made against me by Sir Lucas Pepys and Mr. Keate. The charges were enquired into, and reported to be unfounded, consequently I was exculpated. I stated my exculpation and the proofs of it, publicly in the year 1803. I did not then, nor do I consider it now as libellous of others that I vindicate my own character from unjust aspersions. A public statement of the case became necessary on this occasion; for injurious reports had been propagated industriously by the emissaries of the Physician-General and Surgeon-General, and the refutation, or decision resulting from the enquiry, (though read on parade at the Army Depot,) was not communicated to the whole British army through general orders. Such omission was the cause which induced me, or rather compelled me to publish; but had I not believed that the case concerned the army more than it did myself, I could not have been prevailed upon to do it. I thought then, as I do still that, as the charges had been prepared in an insidious and uncustomary manner among gentlemen, as may be inferred from the Commander in Chief's letter at page 9; so they were utterly contemptible in themselves—from total ignorance of circumstances, as proved by the details of refutation in my publication of 1803. But though contemptible as totally unfounded, they might notwithstanding be pernicious by example; and, as the design was wicked,

wicked, it was expedient that it should be exposed, so that others might be thereby warned to guard against machination. On such grounds I published my book; I do not believe that I said any thing that I could well avoid saying without leaving my vindication short; and I have said or written nothing which I shall retract while I possess evidence of its truth.

The Physician-General and Surgeon-General exult under this head, that the Commander in Chief had been induced, by their humble representations, to revoke my appointment as Inspector-General of Hospitals for the Army of Reserve. On that subject I have little to remark. I was ready in 1803, as I am ready still, to substantiate the truth of whatever I had said or written respecting the Depot Hospital, Sir Lucas Pepys and Mr. Keate; and if their secret intrigues prevailed on this occasion over truth and public good, I leave them to enjoy their triumph. I shelter myself under no protection except the honest discharge of my duty; and, though I have a strong attachment for the army, perhaps a constitutional bias for military service, I am not greedy of money, and never solicited employment for the sake of its rank and emoluments.

4thly. *The want of legal qualification in Dr. Jackson for the practice of physic. This being notorious requires no proof.*

(Signed) L. PEPYS,
T. KEATE.

Observation.—This head of objection is more connected with the office of President of the College of Physicians of London, and his fees, than with science or real qualification to practice medicine. It is so pitiful in itself, that I should not have deemed it worthy of notice did it not directly insult His Majesty's authority. Sir Lucas Pepys may consider the case and enter his protest. I am Medicinæ Doctor by diploma from a medical university as well known as any in Europe, Physician to the Forces by commission; and thus, by the one virtually and by the other legally, qualified to act as Physician in any part of the king's dominions. The commission of our present sovereign must be held to be equally valid or lawful wherever it is found; and on that ground, which Sir Lucas Pepys will not reject, my title to exercise my profession in the army has the same legal or official qualification with his own. If his office be higher, it rests on no other foundations than mine in so far as respects legality of principle, and it has not yet attained the same ground in efficiency of practice. I have exercised my profession in the army for several years, and in considerable variety of service; and, in so doing, I have done the duty which I was appointed

pointed to do. Sir Lucas Pepys on the contrary has been Physician-General for fifteen years, and he has never perhaps to this day prescribed for a sick soldier in a military hospital; nor is it even generally known that he has ever given specific instructions for the treatment of army diseases to young army physicians, when they enter upon duty; consequently his commission is as yet a dead letter—the fruits of his knowledge in expectation only: mine has been in activity, and the results may be known by reference to my acts.*

5thly.

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* The question respecting the comparative success of the practice of Physicians is extremely indelicate in itself, at the same time that it is extremely difficult to be correctly judged. I was compelled, by the charges which were made against me by the Physician-General and Surgeon-General in 1801, to exhibit a view of hospital returns, from which a comparative opinion might in some degree be formed; and I am now compelled, by the strong assertions made to the public through Mr. Keate and others, to state a circumstance which I purposely withheld, and which I would still withhold if I could do it with propriety after what has passed. The Special Board, which was appointed to enquire into the management of the Depôt Hospital in the Isle of Wight in the year 1801, suggested to the Secretary at War, as appears by a letter in the report of their proceedings published last summer, that the question of successful or unsuccessful practice could only be decided by comparative trial between certain physicians and myself; and it is further stated in a postscript to that report, that I was made acquainted with the proposition, as communicated through the War Office. The members of the Board are here under a misapprehension, which I notice reluctantly. All the communications on this subject were made to me

5thly. *Malpractice in Dr. Jackson when formerly employed at the Army Depôt Hospital. Besides the variety of evidence already offered at different times on*

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me through General Hewett, and of course they were strictly official. It is evident that a suggestion of the nature of that alluded to proceeding from the Special Board, as it was not an official document, could not have been communicated with official sanction; and Mr. Yorke, the then Secretary at War was too correct to permit any thing irregular to proceed from his office; nor will he, I am confident, acknowledge that the suggestion of the Board was sent to the Isle of Wight. The following extract which I withheld from the letter addressed to the Special Board, as printed in my letter to Mr. Keate, will explain the seeming misconception between the Special Board and myself in this particular, and will do away the exultation which was expressed by many in the idea that I declined comparative trial when it was in my power, and even pressed upon me.

EXTRACT OMITTED.

" There is a point in your report at page 47, which I notice with extreme regret, for either your memory fails you, or mine fails me. I do not recollect that you questioned me respecting your letter to the Secretary at War of the 24th of December, 1801, and I am confident that I never received a copy of it; for when your report appeared I was at a loss to know the means by which you had proposed to decide the question in dispute. I think I explained to you the reason why I did not give a part of the medical charge of the sick to the Physicians sent to the Isle of Wight on purpose to receive it, previously to your inspection; and I believe I then signified my intention of giving up the whole medical charge as soon as your visit was finished and your opinion was formed; for I then considered myself as under judgment—the sentence unknown—consequently that I could not act with propriety. This I thought at the time;

on this head, several of the prescription books of that Hospital have lately come into our possession, which afford the most incontestible proofs of what the Physician-General, in that capacity, and as President of the College of Physicians, does not hesitate to pronounce malpractice. Extracts from these books, with testimonials of the like import, will be found with the accompanying work at pages 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 145, 146, 147, *and* 148*; and with such evidence before us of unjustifiable and dangerous treatment of the sick by Dr. Jackson, we earnestly hope that the lives of His Majesty's soldiers will not be again subjected to his rashness and ignorance.*

(Signed) L. PEPYS,
T. KEATE.

Observation.—To me as an individual, this objection, rancorously expressed as it may be, is of no consequence, because it is made in total ignorance of circumstances, and as appears by official documents*

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time; I however now regret that I did not retain all the dangerous cases in my own hands till their fate was decided; for though I did not consider myself at liberty to prescribe for a new case, I might, and I think now I ought to have continued my attention to the old ones. The success of my successors would then have been judged purely on its own grounds; for if I left some dangerous cases, I also left many in whom the dangers of the disease were past."

This paragraph was omitted, and for an obvious reason, in the printed letter to Mr. Keate:—the omission gave a temporary triumph to the Physician-General's partizans.

* See Hospital Returns, &c. published in 1803.

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in direct contradiction of truth. But though indifferent to myself, yet viewed in the light of an objection proceeding from the Physician-General, who is at the same time, President of the College of Physicians of London, it cannot fail to make impression on the army, and even on the public; and on that account, the Commander in Chief will, I trust, adopt such measures that the charge be again investigated, so that a full and demonstrative decision on the case be thereby attained. This I believe to be essentially necessary for the public good; because I have written books on some of those diseases which are most common in armies, and several of the army surgeons who are intrusted with the care of the health of the king's troops believe in my opinions. If my doctrines and practices be erroneous, it is time that they be publicly proscribed; but it would be unfair, and it might be injurious to proscribe them on the bare assertion of the President of the College, who never saw me treat a single case of disease, and who appears himself never to have treated a patient of that class upon which my practice was tried. The illnesses of the soldier and those of the ladies of the court are often of a different character; and I am aware, and any man of common sense may conceive it, that means which seem harsh, and which might even be dangerous in the delicate conditions of those persons who ordinarily fall under Sir Lucas's care, though powerful in effect, are perfectly safe as applied to violent diseases in the more robust subjects with whom I have been chiefly concerned.

cerned. Here Sir Lucas Pepys judges without having had the opportunity of experience, and he condemns without knowledge of circumstances, which, notwithstanding his high office, is a privilege that cannot be conceded to him. But besides this difference of condition in subject, which he did not know and could not estimate, there is a principle connected with my rule of practice which he appears to view with abhorrence. It is the duty of all physicians, but it is the direct interest of army physicians to cure diseases as speedily as possible, provided they can do it safely. It is sometimes the interest, and said to be the more general practice of others, not to be very solicitous about shortening the duration. In this case both pursue interest or convenience: viz. the military physician works by the job, and rejoices that his work is soon over; the other works by the day, and may not be sorry that it continue long. The principles are at variance, and those who live by the slow progress in the cure of diseases, will necessarily depreciate those who recommend a decisive rule of practice. Whether I have incurred the censure of the President of the College on this account or not, he himself best knows.

The members of the Special Board, who were appointed to enquire into the management of the Depôt Hospital in the Isle of Wight, did not, after enquiry on the spot, pass censure on the principle on which I acted, nor did they point out danger in the practice which I pursued. One of these gentlemen,

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viz. the late Dr. John Hunter, was a Fellow of the College of Physicians, and not inferior in science perhaps to any of its Fellows; two of the others are licentiates of the college; and the whole of them were men of experience, and well acquainted with the diseases which most usually prevail in armies. If they, who saw the subject with their own eyes, saw no cause for censure, they cannot be supposed to be more enlightened than I am; or, if seeing cause for censure, they reported favourably, they are morally incorrect, which is a more heinous crime than ignorance. The Special Board acted under the express authority of the Commander in Chief. Its report was approved, and an opinion was expressed thereon by His Royal Highness. This was a decision of high authority, and it cannot be reversed without formally shewing cause of error. To shew error, a new trial or re-investigation must be granted; and, as the case relates to the Board, which was authorized by the Commander in Chief to act for a special purpose, the re-investigation cannot be allowed to be precluded by distance of time, as it might be in the case of a simple individual. If error be admitted and new trial granted, it is probable that, under a scientific investigation of the subject, some lights may arise which may serve to benefit the army. The Physician-General will then be pleased to open his stores of learning to the public, and the regimental surgeon, enlightened by the developement of his hitherto concealed principles, will probably

bably be led into a better practical course than that which he now pursues.

When I received the above paper signed by the Physician-General and Surgeon-General of the army, I applied to the Commander in Chief, through the Adjutant-General, requesting that His Royal Highness would be pleased to order the subject to be investigated in a military court; for, though investigation had been refused on a former occasion when I complained of the calumnies of Mr. Keate as offensive to discipline, I had reason to suppose I should obtain it in the present. The instrument, which I have now transcribed, is of a different nature from that of a printed book. It immediately affects the Special Board, as inferring that it made a false report in 1802; and it insults the Commander in Chief, as impugning the accuracy of the decision which he gave as founded on the informations of that report. It thus concerns the public service more than it concerns me as an individual; and on such grounds, I thought it would not fail of being noticed. I am however informed officially, by a letter from the Deputy Adjutant-General, dated 27th of February, 1809, that no investigation in a military court can be granted.

Precluded, in the manner I have stated, from expectation of notice in a military court, I feel it to be incumbent on me to present my case in another form; and to add a few observations on each head of objection preferred against my conduct and professional character by the Physician-General and Sur-

geon-General of the army, on the 27th of January of the present year. In doing this, I do not conceive that I offend the laws of military subordination. If I am denied trial, I consider it to be due, both to the public, and myself, as I have acted in a public station, not to permit charges of such aggravation to stand on record in public offices, without exposure. It belongs to those concerned to adopt further proceeding: I shrink from no inquiry that can be instituted, provided it be an open one.—I have taken the liberty of previously submitting this statement to your consideration as Commander in Chief, in the opinion that it is important to the interests of the public; for if a person who has discharged his duties faithfully and honestly, and who retired from service with marks of official approbation, be liable, at a subsequent period, to be calumniated and persecuted for conduct that has been officially approved and commended, discipline is outraged; and if no protection from such outrage be afforded through the law under which he lived and acted, the law is defective and justice is offended. This, as far as concerns myself, is a matter of no great moment; but it is of paramount importance to the service. It is superfluous to add more, and it might be indecorous to do it.

I have now, Sir, finished my statement; and, as the prosperity of the country in which I live, and particularly of the army in which I have served, is as dear to me as to any man in the nation, though my lot in life be humble, I beg leave to impress on your

your mind that, while the health of troops is of the greatest importance to the success of military undertakings, and while a medical staff is appointed for the purpose of preserving and restoring health, it is essential towards the assuring of this purpose, that health officers not only possess knowledge of their science, but that they be respected in their stations. The controversial writings on medical arrangement for armies, which have inundated the public since the publication of the fifth report of the Commissioners of Military Inquiry, have brought the medical class into difficulty and degradation. The writings abound with gross language, instead of authenticated fact and solid argument; and while individuals offend, the whole body is disparaged. It is obvious that the report of the Commissioners ought either to have been acted upon immediately, or if it was supposed to be incorrect in some points, the case ought to have been inquired into, the errors ascertained through proper testimony, and rectified by the authority of an official commission competent to judge the fact in all its relations. Instead of this direct and plain rule of proceeding, the report of the Commissioners is a dead-letter, and the subject is left to the discussion of pamphleteers and mercenary journalists, who assert any thing, and who support nothing by correct evidence. Controversy naturally begets ill manners, and it often perplexes the truth; the medical class thus loses respect, and medical science appears in a state of chaos. The case calls for

for remedy, and such remedy as belongs to the office of the Commander in Chief will, I doubt not, be applied. Discipline, it is to be hoped, will be enforced through all ranks; and government, if it believe that benefit can result to the army from the aids of the medical class and its knowledge, will not fail to institute a Board or Commission for the purpose of investigating the subject and determining by authentic evidences, what is true and solid, and what is false and specious only; so that having proved facts and demonstrated principles, if any such exist, a system of arrangement may be formed thereon for guarding the army's health,—such as is at the same time true, efficient and economical.

I have the honor to be

SIR,

With all due respect and deference,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

ROBERT JACKSON, M.D.

Late Head of the Hospital at the Army Depôt.

The Right Honourable Sir David Dundas, K.B.
Commander in Chief of H. M. F.

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